Reviews

Other Europes

Antje Scharenberg

Lorenzo Marsili and Niccolò Milanese, *Citizens of Nowhere - How Europe Can Be Saved from Itself*, Zed 2018

Johny Pitts, *Afropean - Notes from Black Europe*, Allen Lane 2019

Europe has voted. Yet much remains unclear after the 2019 European Parliament elections - which may or may not have been Britain's last. While Farage's Brexit Party achieved the highest result (31.6 per cent), votes for outspokenly pro-EU parties added up to 40.4 per cent (the combined outcome of votes for Liberal Democrats, Greens, SNP, Plaid Cymru and Change UK). A similar trend was visible across the continent: traditionally centrist parties lost votes to both Greens and progressives, as well as to parties mobilising on xenophobic rhetoric, including in Italy and France, where Marine Le Pen's far-right list overtook Emmanuel Macron's.

What *is* clear from this, however, is the urgency of the question of what another Europe might look like: this remains one of the most pressing issues of the contemporary moment. And with the European elections now in the past, these two excellent publications point out some of the potential paths towards another European future.

Lorenzo Marsili and Niccolò Milanese's thought-provoking proposal *Citizens of Nowhere - How Europe Can Be Saved from Itself* can be understood as a sophisticated analysis of neoliberal globalisation and a passionate manifesto for radical change. The title refers back to Theresa May's remark at the Conservative Party Conference in 2016, when she argued that those who think of themselves as citizens of the world are, in fact, citizens of nowhere. Marsili and Milanese take this claim as their starting point and re-interpret it, arguing that without the political means to act beyond borders, all of us might, indeed, be citizens of nowhere. The book's key argument is framed as an intervention between politics and culture, with a foreword from Cuban

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performance artist Tania Bruguera and an afterword by Yanis Varoufakis, former Greek finance minister and initiator of the Democracy in Europe Movement 2025 (DIEM25). In other words, *Citizens of Nowhere* wants us to engage on two fronts - hacking political institutions while simultaneously unsettling the basic cultural logics that underpin institutional politics today.

The authors begin with a review of the last ten years of crisis, with reference to numerous historical, theoretical and literary figures - ranging from Greece to Gramsci and from Brussels to Borges. The analysis then digs deeper into three decades of neoliberal hegemony, with a focus on how the nation-state framework is inherently entangled in the workings of neoliberal globalisation. In light of today's global economic processes, Marsili and Milanese argue that '"socialism in one country" has never been a poorer slogan' (p83), as neoliberalism parasitically feeds off national ideologies. At the same time, the book is *not* about 'making Europe great again' (p114). Indeed, the authors do not hesitate to criticise the workings of both national and international institutions. However, they also challenge the idea that the European Union is 'unambiguously neoliberal' (p90), pointing to the EU's role in fining corporate data giants like Google, investing infrastructural funds in deprived areas or implementing EU-wide standards on maximum working hours.

What makes their narrative particularly convincing are the references to concrete demands and examples of existing alternatives. For instance, they make the case for more radical taxation measures, and an alternative refugee politics (calling for humanitarian corridors, genuinely transnational approaches and the end of Fortress Europe). And, while they discuss theoretical questions, they also link this to political practice. For example, they discuss the very meaning of citizenship itself, but also give space to instances of progressive citizenship in action. Examples include trade union actions, such as the movement in support of the Grunwick strikers in 1976-8 in the UK, or the more recent strikes organised by Deliveroo, Uber and Amazon workers; mobilisations against evictions, such as those involved in the civil society network PAH (Platform for People Affected by Mortgages), whose spokesperson Ada Colau later became the mayor of Barcelona; and activism on migrancy, as in the case of City Plaza in Athens, where an abandoned hotel was reopened by activists to house hundreds of migrants.

Finally, the book closes with the authors' vision for radical institutional change. Discussing historical transnational formations, from the First International and early

anarchist federalism to the World Social Forums, and the work of prominent figures such as Karl Marx, Altiero Spinelli and Ursula Hirschman, the book concludes with a call for a transnational interdependence party, which would operate across geographical locations as well as within and beyond institutions.

A potential limitation here might be that, due to its focus on the possibilities for institutional resistance in Europe, this section makes little reference to what might be learned from transnational mobilisations such as the international feminist movement, the Zapatista uprising against global neoliberalism in Chiapas or the practices of stateless democracy in Rojava. Nevertheless, the major strength of this book is that it powerfully unsettles contemporary frameworks of political organising (national and international), in order to accentuate an urgent question for the contemporary moment: what forms of political organising across borders *are* necessary to tackle global neoliberalism and drive systemic change?

Another highly recommended book which approaches a similar set of questions from a more personal angle is Johny Pitt's recently published *Afropean - Notes from Black Europe*. Pitt's intelligently and powerfully narrated journey through Black Europe zooms in on the complicated nuances and personal implications of the ways in which structural inequality and racism in Europe play out on a daily basis. The book begins with Pitts's experience growing up in working-class Sheffield, where he was born to an African American father and a white British mother in the 1980s. From there, it sets out to trace the stories of Black Europe from Brussels to Berlin and from Moscow to Marseille.

One of Pitts's strengths as a writer is his precise eye for details, and a talent for capturing delicate atmospheres. In one anecdote he describes a scene where two Senegalese workers are cleaning a Eurostar carriage upon arrival in Brussels, clearing up the debris left behind by mostly white travellers. He observes the continuing existence of a power dynamic between Africans and Europeans that 'hadn't changed for centuries': 'whatever European countries like to suggest, black people were still cleaning white people's toilets, changing their bedsheets, guarding their buildings and sweeping their floors' (p34). Here, Pitts makes visible the two major problems Europe has created, as Aimé Césaire described: 'the problem of the proletariat *and* the colonial problem' (emphasis added).[1] In this sense, *Afropean* not only traces Black Europe - it also indirectly maps ongoing European racisms. It challenges structural inequality as well as the cultural expressions on which it feeds, including,

for instance, Belgium's *Tintin in the Congo* or the Dutch holiday figure Zwarte Piet.

Yet, the picture Pitts paints is far from black and white. *Afropean* dwells in the everyday struggles and subtle nuances of what it means to be living between categories. The author describes his own position as 'not black enough for my old black friends, not white enough for my old white friends, not working class enough for my old area in Sheffield but not middle class enough to survive cliquey London' (p71). This attention to notions of messiness, hybridity and in-betweenness is reminiscent of the works of thinkers such as Stuart Hall, Paul Gilroy and James Baldwin. Hall once explained his own situational ambivalence towards Europe and what it means to be 'in but not of Europe': 'I confess to feeling most aggressively "European" in America, most aware that I can never really be "European" when actually in Europe'.[2]

This notion of moving between, across and beyond categories applies not only to the book's content but also to its captivating style of writing. Half quasi-ethnography, half travel journal, *Afropean* switches between stories and theory. In the powerful anecdotes and photos that appear throughout the book, we meet Afropean activists, artists, street vendors, passengers, travellers, cyclists, commuters, vagabonds, flâneurs - in short, people *en route* to somewhere else. Besides this focus on everyday encounters, Pitts also includes apposite references to the works of prominent intellectuals such as Fanon, Césaire and Mandela, cultural icons like Zap Mama, and political movements such as the Black Panther Party.

One of the major strengths of this book is that it dares to allow for a sense of ambiguity, unresolved tension and self-critique. In one anecdote, Pitts recalls how two 'Roma kids' stole his phone in Paris, only to then admit that this verdict had been based on assumption and stereotyping. The space that Pitts gives to such doubts and his repeated questioning of his own views makes his account all the more convincing. What *Afropean* teaches the reader about Europe at large is that this same self-reflective stance should be adopted by the continent as a whole: if it wants to be 'saved from itself', Europe also needs to take a critical look in the mirror, allowing wide-ranging, often ambiguous and sometimes uncomfortable perspectives to become visible.

This, then, is what both books have in common: by taking the reader on a journey across Europe, they shift our attention away from Brussels and towards some of the already existing alternatives that are growing in the shadows of

mainstream media headlines and EU institutions. Everyone curious to find out how Europe might be otherwise should read these books.

Notes

1. Aimé Césaire, (1972) *Discourse on Colonialism*, Monthly Review Press, New York 1972, p31.

2. Stuart Hall, 'In but not of Europe: Europe and its myths', *Soundings* 22, Winter 2002-3, pp58-9.

Mass communications as terrain, *The Popular Arts* as weapon

Nick Beech

Stuart Hall and Paddy Whannel, *The Popular Arts*, with an introduction by Richard Dyer, Duke University Press, Durham NC and London 2018

Long out of print, *The Popular Arts* (originally published in 1964) has now been reissued by Duke University Press with a very useful introduction by Richard Dyer, as part of the Stuart Hall: Selected Writings series edited by Catherine Hall and Bill Schwarz. As one of Hall's few book-length works, and as a work that originally appeared at the closure of Hall's editorship of *New Left Review* and opening of his collaboration with Richard Hoggart at the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, *The Popular Arts* is clearly of historical significance for anyone concerned with the development of the New Left and cultural studies in mid-century Britain. But it need not be of interest to intellectual historians alone.

The Popular Arts is not a straightforward text. Based on Hall and Whannel's collaboration and experience through the late 1950s, teaching in Secondary Modern schools, art colleges and Workers Educational Association (WEA) classes, the authors originally intended to produce a 'practical handbook' for teaching cinema, popular

music, genre writing and advertising. The result was a peculiar, four-part hybrid. The first part - 'Definitions' - attempts to refine the terms for an investigation of these various cultural phenomena, distinguishing between 'media', 'arts', 'folk art', 'popular art' and 'mass art'. The third part - 'Social Themes' - presents a sketch of the industrial production of mass culture in Britain, and the institutions and economic structure of the industry, as well as some account of the policy debates on the function and role of mass culture in society. The fourth and final section of the original book - which has been removed for this edition - contained proposals for 'study material' and loose lesson plans for teachers, as well as filmographies, bibliographies and other study sources. There was material of some value in this fourth part, and whilst it's understandable that the editors considered much of it dated and of little wide interest, I hope that someone might choose to make the material available online.

But it is the second part - 'Topics for Study' - which is the most substantial, and the most interesting. Here, Hall and Whannel present various thematics and foci of study for the classroom - on the representation of violence in films and on television; on the structure of thriller novels and the language of detective fiction; on the representation of love and romance in pulp fiction and 'women's magazines'; on the advertising industry. But really, these are far from any lesson plans. Rather, they are essays on the range of emotional, cognitive and ethical effects that are produced within mass communications, or that popular arts respond to, elaborated through careful excavations of specific works - from a TV adaptation of *Oliver Twist*, to *Bridge Over the River Kwai*, Raymond Chandler's *Lady in the Lake*, or an issue of *Mirabelle*.

The book is most obviously pioneering for the fact that none of these forms of material culture were considered of any educational, let alone intellectual, value amongst leaders of educational policy or at the centres of traditional intellectual life at that time. One of the principle aims of the work was to show that the 'popular arts' were not only available to deep critical attention and analysis, but that they provided privileged terrain on which to understand the contemporary world, and therefore were of fundamental value for education - as had previously been argued for English literature in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century.

But the authors always knew that the book was both something less, and something much more, than a 'handbook' or 'manual'. It is a book that is better understood, not as an historical document of the emergence of film studies or similar in Britain (though it is that too), but as a work in dialogue - with Richard

Hoggart's, *The Uses of Literacy* (1957), the trilogy of works by Raymond Williams (*Culture and Society, 1750-1950* [1958], *The Long Revolution* [1961], and the related novel *Border Country* [1961]), and the two major early works of E.P. Thompson (the biography *William Morris: From Romantic to Revolutionary* [1955] and *The Making of the English Working Class* [1963]). All of these works assumed that the link between transformations in the form and content of communications, and transformations of power, social structure and material reproduction, had to be articulated and thought through. Nevertheless, as the pages of *New Reasoner*, *Universities and Left Review*, and *New Left Review* in the period testify, if these authors may have shared this assumption, it wasn't at all clear how and on what exact basis. *The Popular Arts* illuminates Hall and Whannel's position in this argument, and, in particular, shows us how indebted Hall was to Hoggart, Williams and Thompson (and they in turn to him), but also how distinct his understanding of the problematic was. Certainly, and immediately, one is struck by the deep level of interest, valuation, and sympathy for mass media forms and content that simply isn't imaginable in the works of Hoggart, Williams or Thompson.

The shared problematic of the first New Left is too often reduced to one intellectual inheritance - that of F.R. and Q D. Leavis - and as a result the project and products of the first New Left are categorised as 'left-Leavisism'. Richard Dyer's excellent introduction to *The Popular Arts* shows clearly why and how Hall and Whannel (just as Hoggart, Williams and to a lesser extent Thompson) drew on the moral criticism of the Leavises and the 'practical criticism' of I.A. Richards. *The Popular Arts* is, indeed, spun from the threads of 'discrimination', 'close analysis', and the search for 'moral seriousness' that the Leavisite inheritance provides. But, again as Dyer argues, to reduce their work to Leavisism would be a major mistake. The New Left commitments to counter 'imperialism and authoritarianism', alongside the need to resolve the problem of, what would later be clearly articulated as, the 'base-and-superstructure debate' within Marxism, mark out the project as distinct. Dyer also notes the strong refusal by Hall and Whannel to accept the nostalgia and projection of an 'organic community', now lost, onto the past - something that was inherent in the Leavisite project. What Dyer is less prepared to do is speculate on *why* Hall and Whannel would prove resistant to this latter aspect of Leavisism. I would suggest that it has something to do with their formation as subjects and their relation to the landscape in which *The Popular Arts* was produced, that is, London - something I will return to in a moment.

Too often, *The Popular Arts* has been presented as a limited work, indicative of the paucity of analytical tools available at the time - still awaiting the flowering of cultural studies at the University of Birmingham, the development of more sophisticated forms of theoretical and analytical treatment (within Marxist, psychoanalytic, feminist, structuralist and post-structuralist frameworks), and the burgeoning of film studies in the 1970s (in forums such as *Screen*). Dyer suggests an alternative - that it is precisely in the concern for aesthetics and *feeling* produced within popular arts that the work is most valuable, offering a glimpse of a 'path not taken' (p xxi) in cultural studies and other arts and humanities researches, that are otherwise too concerned with ethics and meaning alone. I would suggest something slightly different.

If we understand *The Popular Arts* not as the prescient fore-runner for cultural studies, but as a book which shows how Hall and Whannel were beginning to present and analyse the 'structure of feeling' (to use Raymond Williams's term) of their shared present, then I believe we have a better grasp of the value of the text. Whether discussing the western, the crime thriller, or the romance column, Hall and Whannel consistently refer back to the *urban* as providing the fundamental meaning of a given mass cultural form. The feelings and forms of cognition evoked in the book, the narrative arcs circumscribed, or the relationship of figure to landscape which it poses - all of these are referred in the book, sometimes overtly, sometimes covertly, to the subject confronting the urban metropole.

What the authors are targeting, then, is not simply an 'absence' in the classroom of material relevant to students' lives - but the *deliberate* exclusion, condescension, and control of young people by institutions nominally established to provide independence and freedom (for Hall's scathing critique of Secondary Modern education - and the necessity for a pedagogical approach and curriculum that corrects that educational system along the lines indicated in *The Popular Arts* - see his essay 'Absolute Beginnings', in *Universities and Left Review* [1957]). *The Popular Arts* - in providing insight into the feelings, emotions and cognition of the urban metropole, and in providing access to the key media through which these are reflected and reproduced - is less like a 'handbook', in my view, and more like a weapon. In this respect I would disagree with Dyer's positioning of the authors in his introduction. Dyer rightly argues against David Horowitz's framing of *The Popular Arts* as demonstrating how young working-class men are able to 'resist' commercial culture. But then Dyer suggests that the work betrays a 'teacherly' concern for 'the

wider worry about young people' (p xiv). *The Popular Arts* does neither of these things. What the book does show is how commercial culture constitutes a terrain in which values are constructed and brought into relation, felt and fought out - if there is a 'teacherly' concern, it is in providing students with the critical tools to confront that terrain for their own self-determination.

I would suggest taking Hall seriously when he said, in interview with Les Back in 2009:

> I discovered my subject … coming out of the station at Paddington. It was Caribbeans but over here, it was the Windrush journey to here. That has been my subject, ever since: the diaspora … Lots of things that I've written about which don't appear to be about that are seen through the prism of trying to work out who the people of the diaspora are, who they think they are, where they want to go, where have they come from, what's their relation to the past, what's their memories etc and how they express their creativity, how they express where they want to go to next. That's what has been in a sense my subject. So that is really where cultural studies began for me. It didn't begin with Raymond Williams, it began with my struggle to come to terms with that experience …[1]

To revise my earlier statement - if *The Popular Arts* is best understood in relation to the contemporary works of Hoggart, Williams and Thompson, that is *only* the case, if it is also read in conjunction with Sam Selvon's *The Lonely Londoners*, or Colin McInnes's *Absolute Beginners*, or George Lamming's *The Pleasures of Exile*: works that present the language, problems and *style* of the Black Diaspora in 1950s London and/or urban working-class youth. Read in that spirit, *The Popular Arts* becomes not only a curious, provisional, and suggestive set of critical analyses - it becomes a painful, angry, and sometimes joyful retaliation to the conditions of brutal exploitation and oppression exercised on the young in the urban metropole.

Note

1. Stuart Hall in conversation with Les Back, 'At Home and Not at Home', Cultural Studies, Vol 23, No 4, 2009, p662.

Why we still need to talk about Enoch

Simon Peplow

Shirin Hirsch, *In the Shadow of Enoch Powell: Race, Locality and Resistance*, Manchester University Press

In 2018, fifty years after Enoch Powell's infamous anti-immigration 'Rivers of Blood' speech, its anniversary was marked by plenty of renewed attention - including a contentious BBC Radio 4 documentary and a proposed blue plaque in Powell's old parliamentary constituency of Wolverhampton. There were subsequent charges from some that Britain was obsessed by Powell, when it should instead be concentrating on fighting today's battles over racism. However, Shirin Hirsch's *In the Shadow of Enoch Powell* successfully connects the past with the present by illustrating Powell's enduring influence on discussions about race and immigration in modern Britain.

Hirsch's focus makes this a different book from other works on Powell, in that it places the industrial town of Wolverhampton and its people, and their response to Powell's speech, at the forefront. It aims to give a voice to local people of colour, too often rendered silent by contemporary media reports and subsequent discussions. This local focus drives one of the book's central arguments: that Powell's Wolverhampton constituents were witness to the shift that he made from the paternalistic racism of the global British Empire towards a local focus that characterised non-white immigrants as a threat. This saw a repositioning of his ideology, which became based around efforts to maintain a nostalgic and mythical view of national stability, and a reconceptualisation of Wolverhampton - and England - as an historically harmonious and white dominion.

The book's focus on Wolverhampton allows Hirsch to refute such constructions, and to consider both the impact on and the response of local people of colour following Powell's speech. This is achieved through a range of illuminating and often powerful sources, including both archival interviews and more recent ones conducted by the author. Local patterns of resistance emerged in response to Powell's speech, and these are placed by Hirsch within the context of longer

struggles for recognition in arenas such as the labour movement and multiracial education. Disputes in this period demonstrate how the term 'immigrant' was used as code for 'non-white', as Powell furthered discursive constructions that recast ideas of immigration as ideas of race. However, if 'Rivers of Blood' fostered new forms of racism in Britain, the response demonstrated that new forms of resistance were also emerging. These were movements that would require time and organisation to grow more effective, but nonetheless developed from daily responses to the racism that was fuelled by Powell's speech.

The book is split into various thematic chapters: locating Powell and his 1968 speech within postcolonial Britain; the history and racial dynamics of Wolverhampton; the local response and patterns of resistance to 'Rivers of Blood'; and the contested legacy of Powell and his speech. This structure is effective, allowing for a strong focus and argument to be maintained throughout. For example, the chapter on Powell's legacy begins with a quotation from Powell himself, taken from his 1977 biography of Joseph Chamberlain: 'All political lives, unless they are cut off in midstream at some happy juncture, end in failure'. Hirsch documents the many people who have attempted to rehabilitate Powell and the 'failures' of his political career by downplaying or ignoring his racism, as well as others who have endeavoured to portray his legacy as one of sacrifice: that his interjections on race and immigration in the public discourse came at the cost of his own political career. She concludes that Powell remains a figure evoked by all sides: utilised both to criticise the apparent limitations that have been placed on conversations about immigration, and to restrict access to a nuanced history of anti-racist struggle and resistance.

This book is quite short, but it by no means neglects the key points. While some aspects of the story are only briefly mentioned and might have been further discussed, the book does a good job of giving some attention to these without detracting from its central focus and concise argument. For example, when outlining the post-speech strikes that have traditionally been portrayed as demonstrating working-class solidarity with Powell (recent scholarship has questioned the actual depths of such support) Hirsch deftly brings this issue back to Wolverhampton through examination of local trade union activity and instances of workers' support (or otherwise) for Powell. It would be interesting to examine potential further links through other aspects, such as possible connections with the Black supplementary school movement, or any legacy for the often-fragmented Black Power movement in

Britain; but these, of course, are not this work's central focus.

When I mentioned in passing to somebody that I was reading a book on Powell, their response was: 'Do we really need to keep talking about Enoch Powell?' This important book clearly and effectively shows us that we do. It demonstrates the significance and legacy of Powell and his 'Rivers of Blood' speech - and the new forms of both racism and opposition that it prompted - and it clearly establishes that knowledge of this history is crucial to understanding and combating contemporary racism in Britain.

The racialisation of Hungarian politics

John Clarke

Kristóf Szombati, *The Revolt of the Provinces: Anti-Gypsyism and Right-Wing Politics in Hungary*, Berghahn Books, 2018

Hungary has attracted increasing attention in recent years, mainly associated with the increasingly authoritarian rule of Viktor Orbán's Fidesz governments, noted for their anti-Roma and anti-migrant sentiments; their promotion of an 'illiberal' alternative to the 'liberal democracy' of the West and the European Union; their hostility to internationalist NGOs and the existence of Central European University (CEU) in Budapest; and their continuing assaults on George Soros and his works. Kristof Szombati's book provides a critical back story to some of these developments; it is centred on the role of 'anti-Gypsyism' in fostering this rightward shift and its distinctively nationalist and authoritarian character. Based on a PhD thesis (undertaken between 2010 and 2105 at CEU), the book explores the conditions, dynamics and consequences of a revived and far-reaching anti-Roma mobilisation during this period, and its links to the political successes of both the Fidesz and Jobbik (the Movement for a Better Hungary) parties.

Szombati poses the question of how to study such racialising politics; and in this

he refuses the temptation to treat them as merely the latest instances of a long and unbroken history of divisions between 'True Hungarians' and the 'Roma'. Although he acknowledges that this history delivers symbolic resources that can be mobilised, he argues instead for a more conjunctural approach. More particularly, his study is informed by two 'broad analytic moves':

> (1) situating ideas about 'race' and ethnicity in everyday relations, experiences and agency, and showing how these are shaped by broader political economic processes and pressures; and (2) identifying relational strategies and processes that connected local sites of contention and allowed for the transposition of local antagonisms into regional and nationwide political strategies (pp1-2).

He achieves this by ethnographically studying two contrasting localities: Gyöngyöspata, a small town in Heves county in the north east; and Devecser, a town in Veszprém county in the Transdanubian plain. In short, Gyöngyöspata was the site of a significant 'anti-gypsy' political mobilisation, led by Jobbik and its then paramilitary wing, the Hungarian Guard; in contrast, Devecser saw an attempt at a similar mobilisation end in failure (and that failure was one of the conditions for Jobbik rethinking its explicit racism). Szombati draws out the local conditions that enabled and resisted such mobilisations - and analyses how these mobilisations became translated into national politics.

At the heart of these conditions were the increasingly problematic processes of the post-socialist transition (by no means unique to Hungary). But the multiplying neoliberal pressures of the transition, the entry into a world of competitive globalisation, and the 'rationalising' impact of EU membership, all bore down particularly on the Hungarian countryside - its economy, culture and social relations. Deepened by the last Socialist Party government's commitment to neoliberal reforms of both economic policies (not least, the privatisation of collective resources) and the welfare state, these processes created what Szombati calls a double 'crisis of social reproduction' (p1): the first crisis dislocated the ways of life and economic activity of the 'post peasantry', creating both economic vulnerability and a sense of abandonment by the political system. Secondly, these same processes also disrupted the more contingent ways of making a living that had sustained the 'surplus population' - the Roma, who were increasingly segregated in terms of

access to employment, schooling and housing. These dislocations also tended to undermine previously existing forms of co-habitation between the two groups, making the local racialisation of differences more possible. In Gyöngyöspata these possibilities were then seized upon by Jobbik, where the party arrived there to 'defend' the 'True Hungarian' residents of the town from 'Gypsy criminality'. This divide came to structure local politics and provided a template that Jobbik scaled up to the regional and national level. But the 'True Hungarian/Gypsy criminality' split was also taken up by a Fidesz party looking to construct a national political hegemony. Fidesz folded this distinction into its programmatic mission to rescue the 'real Hungary' (and its virtuous citizens) from external and internal enemies. The Hungarian/Roma split was elaborated around other characteristics: hard-working citizens versus feckless scroungers; civilised versus backward; disciplined versus lazy, and so on. Such threads were woven into political discourse and underpinned the remaking of the Hungarian state (especially its welfare aspects). In contrast, Devecser experienced some of the same political and economic processes but other local conditions generated contingent alliances and solidarities that resisted attempts to drive the Jobbik wedge into local social relations. Such relations were undoubtedly strained but never quite crystallised into the stories of what Szombati calls 'redemptive racism' (p228): the promise that Hungarians (the Magyar) can be saved from the Roma presence.

After Devecser, Jobbik engaged in a re-branding exercise, trying to formulate a right-wing nationalism without a racialising division at its core: what the author describes as the move 'from racism to ultranationalism' (p210). The party aimed to render itself more respectable locally and nationally, and sought to make appeals both to both those who felt themselves abandoned by the left (itself collapsing and fragmenting) and to those who found Fidesz rule authoritarian and alienating. In the meantime, though, Fidesz had grown its power at the national level (twice winning super-majorities that enabled it to rewrite the constitution). Szombati summarises the Fidesz project (as articulated in the 'System for National Cooperation') as follows:

> The SNC offers a template for forging a new right-wing sovereignist consensus built on the pillars of neoliberalism 'lite' (the classic programme combined with economic protectionism and significant material concessions to the middle class), anti-egalitarian populism (which allows governments to claim to be advancing the interests of

> the hardworking majority), exclusionary nationalism (which offers a potent tool for valorizing the downwardly mobile and insecure lower middle class), and authoritarianism (which chokes dissent and undermines pluralism). It represents a fundamental shift in the modality through which a rightist ruling bloc attempts to construct hegemony on the European periphery - one that is clearly tilted towards the coercive rather than the consensual end of the spectrum but leaves the outer forms of democratic class rule intact (p238).

I was thoroughly engaged by Szombati's analysis of these developments: the detailed ethnographic work in the two localities is combined with a rich conceptual apparatus that is driven by a concern to balance the material and symbolic dimensions in building an understanding of these politics. From Karl Polanyi to Stuart Hall, from Pierre Bourdieu to Stan Cohen, from Charles Tilly to G.M. Tamás, from Don Kalb to Julia Szalai, the book is enriched by Szombati's willingness to find and creatively combine resources that enable him - and us - to think about these distinctive developments. Despite that, I have a couple of reservations about the analysis he presents. The most significant concerns the 'crisis of social reproduction' in which questions of gender and the family form never appear (except for reported anxieties about Roma 'breeding'). This does feel like an important missing dimension in both analytical and political terms (and reflects a continuing blindness in orthodox Marxist accounts of reproduction). To ignore the ways in which gender intersects with processes of class (de-)formation and with racialising representations seems unfortunate, particularly when the nationalist and ultranationalist politics that he observes so carefully are recurrently about rescuing a nation from its Others. That nation, in symbolic terms, is feminised: needing to be rescued - and by a 'strong man' such as Orbán. Those politics also direct new welfarist strategies that seek to promote the (Hungarian) family, not least by incentivising motherhood. Secondly, I suspect readers of this journal might think that, despite all those rich analytical resources, the book might have been enriched by a more sustained engagement with Stuart Hall's work (but I usually think that about most analyses).

I want to end by asking what we might gain from reading this impressive (and, at £92, impressively expensive) book. It certainly enriched my understanding of the political-economic-cultural dynamics of Hungary and the rise of Fidesz in particular. It also raises important questions about how we might understand

rightward shifts elsewhere (and not just in the former Eastern bloc). Szombati's insistence on the conjunctural dynamics of racialisation are important (in the face of more essentalising or reductive versions currently circulating). So, too, is his attention to the local dynamics of racialised politics and the translations between local and national scales - and, we might add, the transnational scales (given the emerging links between Fidesz and other right wing/authoritarian/nationalist parties and leaders in the Global North). Equally important, I think, is his attention to the particulars of class formation in these conjunctural processes. The examination of the changing conditions and relationships of the 'surplus population' and 'post peasantry' in his field-work sites is echoed in his consideration of the place of different middle class fractions in the Fidesz bloc. All of this is at odds with the crudeness of many contemporary gestures towards the 'working class' (or 'white working class') as the principal actors in contemporary political eruptions (gestures that are disappointingly echoed in Ivan Szelenyi's introduction to the book).

Antje Scharenberg is a PhD student in Media, Communications and Cultural Studies at Goldsmiths, University of London, whose current research investigates transnational activism in Europe. As an ethnographer and activist, she works with a number of transnational civil society organisations including European Alternatives and Another Europe is Possible.

Nick Beech is Senior Lecturer in the History and Theory of Architecture at the School of Architecture and Cities, University of Westminster. His research concerns the transformation of London, from the late 1930s to the late 1970s.

Simon Peplow is Senior Teaching Fellow in Twentieth Century British History at the University of Warwick.

John Clarke is an Emeritus Professor at the Open University and a recurrent Visiting Professor at Central European University. His latest publication is *Critical Dialogues: Thinking Together in Turbulent Times* (Policy Press 2019).

Soundings